

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Thursday, June 15, 1989 8:00 p.m.**

Date: 89/06/15

[The Committee of Supply met at 8 p.m.]

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Members of the committee, may I have your attention, please, and ask you to take your places?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

head: **Main Estimates 1989-90****Career Development and Employment**

MR. CHAIRMAN: We are gathered here this evening in the presence of the Minister of Career Development and Employment for the purpose of considering the estimates of that department, which are to be found on page 69 of the main estimates book and page 23 of the elements book.

Madam Minister, would you like to make a few introductory remarks concerning your department and its estimates?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd be delighted to, notwithstanding the fact that some of my colleagues seem to be calling the question right away. I know they're just dying to hear my full report on this department, as are the opposition members.

In all seriousness, Mr. Chairman, I do have a few observations to make. I wanted to say to all hon. members that this for me is a very different department, one that I was not acquainted with before. I will first start by introducing some officials who are there in the gallery who have put some very hard work into the program area and also the budget development of this department. I'd like to introduce Al Craig, Ried Zittlau, Earl Mansfield, Dave Chabillon, and Jim Corneil. Would they rise, please.

AN HON. MEMBER: You forgot the best looking ones up there.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Yeah, I was just going to say: my colleagues, take note of some ladies in the gallery, and I know the deputy minister's wife is up there. If things don't go well tonight, she's the nurse in the House and will minister to somebody. We're not sure who's going to have to be ministered to at this point in time.

But, Mr. Chairman, this group of officials, I think it is fair to say from my very short while in the department, are a group that have had their light hidden under a bushel basket. It's an incredibly important department and, as all of us I think see it, should be the leading edge in terms of preparing Alberta's labour force for the 1990s and beyond. I think, as is indicated in some of the material that I will make mention of tonight that I have read, one book -- that is *The New Consensus on Family and Welfare* -- mentions a community of self-reliance. I think that is what we are all working towards. That is, we will have the community of Alberta as a whole being self-reliant. I think

we would all wish that.

Mr. Chairman, a little bit of information about Alberta's labour force. I think we all know that it's highly volatile and has to be responsive to international circumstances. I used to say that about farming all the time, and I don't think that I had an appreciation of just how important it was for our workers to continue to upgrade their skills in order to be able to participate in the industries that we see will be coming to Alberta and those that are here, in terms of the change that they are going to be facing in order to be competitive internationally, because that's the sum and substance of the Alberta economy.

I think that we see a fairly high turnover. We see a very high education, and that's been mentioned several times as we look at the statistics on those people coming out of high school in Alberta. I think that probably Ontario and British Columbia and Alberta would rank very close in terms of having some very positive educational statistics. We have the highest participation by women. The other thing of note -- and we hear a lot of this mentioned in a number of discussions about what the Alberta economy is like -- is that we see a shift from a goods-producing to service-producing economy, although I think it's really important to note that a lot of the so-called experts from Japan, who speak a lot about where their economy has been and the kind of emphasis that has been on sort of the information age, have also realized there that they have to watch very closely the balance they have between the service industry and the goods-producing industry. There must be a balance, and some of us have tended to forget that as we go whole hog talking about the service industry. I think that our labour market policy requires us to show flexibility and to respond to changing conditions, which obviously is the case when we look at the economic diversification that Alberta is enjoying.

Of course, the people are our most important resource. We will not have economic diversification unless we have a skilled labour force that will make all of our industries go. Mr. Chairman, I think the Alberta workers know that in the main they must be responsible for seeking that upgrading, and the government of Alberta and this department must certainly play a large role in seeing that the opportunities are there for our workers to be continually upgraded.

I've got some historical information here. Alberta continues to lead the way in terms of money per capita that's put into employment and training programs, and I think that certainly has shown the positive results by the very skilled work force that we have, but always in mind knowing that we could do a better job and that we've got to continue to keep our options open and our labour force updated in terms of their skills.

The role of Career Development and Employment is to help individuals and employers equip themselves with information about the labour force, and there are a number of ways that we do this: through career counseling; business consulting; labour market information centres; career programs and resources; with our publications; a Career Hotline, which is available to all citizens right across the province; Women's Career Resource Centre; and influencing other levels of government in other provincial departments in the type of jobs that they will do, especially in the awareness area.

I think it's fair to say that we are encouraged by the strength of our economy, and it was interesting for me to read the observations of my predecessor last year in talking about the significant drop in unemployment and the unemployment statistics that he had noticed over the previous two years, unemployment last

year being just over 9 percent. That was a very positive figure relative to the ones that we had been looking at for several years previous to that

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Mr. Chairman, as we've noted in the House with the recent statistics, we see the unemployment now registered around 6.9 percent, when in fact a couple of years ago it was something like three points higher. We all, I think, rejoice in those figures because there is nothing more important to every single citizen who is able bodied than to be able to enjoy some job.

As the economy turns around, our emphasis changes, and we have, as you will note by the budget, changed the emphasis from a lot of job development, work development, to go into the training area. There are a lot of reasons for that. We've got to face a challenge that's ahead of us. We have a youth population that in percentage terms is shrinking significantly. We've got an economy on a global basis that we must recognize and be able to compete in. We have a recent free trade agreement which puts us in a wonderful position because of the kinds of attitudes that Albertans historically have, and that is one of participation and competitiveness. But, again, we must keep them in position to do that.

Obviously, as we look around the room, there is an aging population. I won't glance too long at too many people; I won't look back. We have a population that statistically -- they're not in this room; I should say they're not in this room -- but outside there, somewhere in Alberta, there are people who are getting older. The percentage of them is going up, which means that obviously the labour force that is in place in Alberta as we look into the next 10, 20 years is going to be having to support more and more programs, as we see our population age and be in need of certain kinds of programs.

I think the department sees the utilization of what we call people who are nontraditional in terms of major participation in the labour force, and some of that I guess we would say is unfortunate, because we may not have provided the opportunities nor tried to enhance their attitude about the importance of participating in the labour force. We see some women additionally, I think, who would like to enter the labour force, our native community, and handicapped people.

There's been a lot of emphasis of late. I know there's been a report worked on by one of my colleagues, who was doing it for the department of social services, looking at where our handicapped population will be and what it is that we can do to enhance their participation in the life of Alberta. Obviously, that means being able to enjoy some type of work to whatever extent they are capable. I think that as we look at the Premier's commission, they've made some comments. What I really enjoyed were their comments that really focused on ability as opposed to disability. I think we should all think about that: look at our abilities and the ability of each individual person and try to utilize that ability for the good of all Alberta and our communities and particularly for the good of that individual. I think there is nothing more dignified than work.

As I look at the multitude of programs offered, Mr. Chairman, let me just quickly go over some of them. Some of them you will recognize as having been there for several budget cycles, and some of them will disappear. That's calculated. It will continue to be calculated as we look at our programs and make them as current as we want our labour force to be. It's

very interesting, I think, as from time to time we visit our postsecondary institutions. I'm always amazed, number one, by some of the incredibly wonderful people that I meet there, people who are enthused and want to continually move along with the times. But equally I'm distressed by some of the people that I meet: once having achieved their education and beginning to teach in a postsecondary institution, suddenly the world can stop because now that they've done it, nothing's going to change. They don't have that spirit of excitement, a sense of adventure in terms of the challenges that the world has to offer and particularly transmitting some enthusiasm to our young people in terms of what it is they will need and the kind of attitude they will have to have to continue to enjoy a reasonable standard of living by participating in the labour force in whatever form, with traditional work, our blue-collar workers, our professional people, and so on.

Some of the programs. In the employment area over time we've had the Alberta business and community development program, Alberta international marketing, which is a reasonably unsung program, and I hope we'll have more interest in that one, given especially our free trade agreement and our search into international markets, the Pacific Rim, and Europe for business opportunities.

Employment skills program, priority employment program, the Quebec/Alberta student employment exchange: Mr. Chairman, it's really wonderful to meet the young people who have taken advantage of some of these programs, because not only are they picking up skills that they will utilize, I'm sure for the rest of their lives, but they also do something very special. They come to know us, those young people that come from Quebec, and we come to know them, as is exactly the situation for our Alberta students who travel to Quebec. And I think that all of us recognize that there's nothing more important in this country, to the cohesiveness of how we operate, than that kind of exchange, where our young people are our very best ambassadors.

We have special placement work experience programs, summer temporary employment program, known as STEP. I think that's probably the program that draws the most interest at certain times of the year. We have the farm employment program.

So it goes on, Mr. Chairman. In the employment and training area we have the Alberta youth employment and training program, we have the YMCA Youth Enterprise Centre that we fund, and we have the employment alternatives program, and that's an initiative that came about last year between the social services ministry and the career development ministry. In the training area we have Alberta training program, tailor-made training which you will hear far more about as we address our new industries in the province, Alberta vocational training, private vocational schools, vocational rehabilitation for disabled persons -- and somehow maybe we should change that term, but it does deal with people in terms of special needs. The Apprenticeship and Trade Certification: another major thrust, Mr. Chairman, and important for this province as we see the industries that are going to be locating here. We have an Opportunity Corps, a group of people in two different places in the province; I think it was Rocky Mountain House and Peace River that I visited. There are many such centres that are taking advantage of this hands-on training, and most of those people, young and older, have special needs and require extra attention in order to bring out their capabilities, because a great many of them have not been in the work force, or if they have, it's been for a very short period of time.

In terms of information and counseling we have Alberta career development centres, career information hot line, career programs and resources branch, hire-a-student, and I think all of us have been hearing from that program just over the last while.

We support special needs groups. An example of some of them are Access 45 in Lethbridge; distinctive employment counseling services of Alberta; Native Outreach, which I believe has a slightly different name now, but I don't have it in front of me; Opportunity 45; Placement 45; and the YMCA employment placement program. We have a couple of youth employment centres, and as I understand it, while we have some specifics addressed to youth employment, we also have our youth served in the many career development centres around the province.

Lastly but certainly not least, we have our immigration and settlement branch programs. All of us will be aware of the many, many people who are coming from outside of our country, bringing special cultures, skills, but many of them still needing some support by way of their early months or maybe even year or two in the province of Alberta, indeed in Canada. But in Alberta we think we have excellent programs. So we do have an immigration program, we have a settlement program, and a very, very important component of all of this is our English as a Second Language program. How often have all of us sat in this Legislature, and we will continue to very often meet young people in our gallery, and some of them not so young, who are taking English as a second language? Of course, we hope to see those people participating in the Alberta work force and becoming the kind of citizens I know they would like to be.

In just a quick sum-up, Mr. Chairman, we should address just the major areas of change. Now I'm going to have to go and look for my notes, and maybe I'll just bring those out later. Let me end with this. The several months that I've been in this department, I have been struck by a number of things. First of all, the people that I've met who work for the department, some of the people that the department serves -- for instance, today I had brought to me a lot of letters that come from people who make observations about the programs they've accessed. They're very, very special letters, and the telephone calls that we get are also very special. It's because for the most part people's attitude is one of looking to be self-reliant, but somehow over the course of the last 20 years in this province, I think we've taken some of that away in terms of our imparting to people our sense that indeed they can be self-reliant. I was just taken by one comment that I think sums up so much of what happens in this department, one comment on a card that was written to somebody, some counselor, to say thank you. And what was the comment? "Thanks for believing I can do it." Mr. Chairman, I think that really says it all. We must believe in people. We must not somehow give over that they can't do it. We've been doing that over the course of a number of years. I think that while well-intentioned programs, somehow they signaled that we didn't really believe that people could do it.

When I talked about the community of self-reliance, I wanted to mention some of the academic works that have been done just over the course of the last year or two. I think we all -- and we do it in this Legislature -- seem to take sides. Some of us seem to be out here and somebody else over here, and there's a whole big gap in the middle that people are falling through. So some people will say we shouldn't spend any money on social programs, that it cripples people and no program is a good program when you're into that kind of business. The other end

of the spectrum will say that you've got to have many more programs; there's got to be a lot more money given to people, because money will be the source of them feeling better about themselves and somehow their dignity is attached to the amount of money they're given. Well, Mr. Chairman, whatever is right to be chosen out of any one of those arguments, we are now faced with, I think, a crisis in our society. And that is that notwithstanding the incredible employment opportunities, the very low unemployment that we see in this province and in the case of other places around North America, we have a great many single, able-bodied people who are not participating in the work force. We should all be concerned about that, and we've got to leave our biases behind and try to address it objectively.

So I was taken when I saw a list of the academics who participated in a work session to bring forward some recommendations. Albeit this information comes from American sources, but you have to know that these people came from both ends of that spectrum that I mentioned, and that's why they're coming together and discussing the issues, about why we are where we are right now was so absolutely critical. One paragraph caught my eye, and I would just like to read it, with your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, bearing in mind that of course the statistics are American. It says:

[Over] 2 million new jobs are being created each year, and entry-level jobs are plentiful and open to all, as millions of immigrants are discovering. In some localities, labour markets are severely depressed, and thus economic growth is necessary. Still, where entry-level jobs are available, if all who were able to work took such jobs, even menial ones . . .

And how often have we used that term?

. . . at first, stayed employed, and built up skills and proficiency, long-term dependency would be significantly reduced.

So I think we have to think about the value of work for our young people. Because they point out that wherever you start in the labour force, in the entry-level jobs, regardless of the pay, the experience that you have has proven to be critical in all of their assessments of what kind of qualities, what was inherent in the people who have been relatively successful over their lives and staying in the work force.

Mr. Chairman, we're challenged by all of that. The Department of Career Development and Employment is certainly challenged. We must do our part in seeing that we facilitate the workers of Alberta, the enterprises in Alberta, in order for them to be able to compete in this global community that we're in. We can't hide our heads and say, somehow, that we're an island. Albertans haven't traditionally done that, and we certainly don't want to see them do it in the future, so we look forward to assisting all Albertans in achieving their goals for employment and good lives for their families.

I look forward to your questions.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I've been requested to make a humanitarian announcement. A vehicle, a Mercury by make, CDX 445, has its lights on. Maybe it's automatic and they'll go off; I don't know.

The Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

REV. ROBERTS: I'm glad somebody has their lights on.

MR. SIGURDSON: They'll go off automatically within a short period of time, I'm sure.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to follow the minis-

ter, and I'm actually pleased to hear some of her opening comments, comments such as that "people are [the] most important resource" that we have, comments such as that we need to upgrade the skills of unemployed Albertans so that they can go out and be productive members of the work force, comments that we have to retrain our work force because we've got an expanding market and that requires all kinds of new skills that one has to acquire. But isn't it unfortunate, then, that when we've got all of these commitments to upgrading and retraining, when we look through the estimates, we find that the Department of Career Development and Employment is going to be having fewer programs and fewer positions for Albertans to find for themselves?

We find that the department has lost some of its funding over the course of time, and it's losing it in the area of program delivery, not in the area of the administration of the department; heavens no, always more money for administration, it seems. If we look in the very first part of the budget, we find that in vote 1.0.4, Finance and Administrative Services, an increase, probably a small amount by comparison when one considers the global budget of 5.3 percent -- only \$200,000, which in a budget of \$10 billion provincewide doesn't seem very much. In Planning and Research, an increase of \$38,000; in the area of policy and program development, an increase of \$58,000. But it's all in the administration costs, or seemingly in the administration costs, when we see a loss in the availability of services that are going to be going out.

In 1987-88 we saw a budget for this department of \$209 million; the following fiscal year the estimates were for \$202 million. And what do we have this year? Twenty-two million dollars less than last year, for a total of approximately \$180 million. I think it's important that the minister take some time when she addresses the Assembly again to tell us how it is that we're going to have increased administration costs when in fact we have fewer programs being delivered to Albertans.

We can just flip the page over, start with the Training and Career Services, and the first vote that's to be had is for Program Support, and Administrative Support goes up a whopping 156.9 percent. Administrative Support for Training and Career Services, the delivery of services to Albertans: the administrative amount goes up 156 percent. That's a phenomenal amount of money, \$400,000-plus going up in the administrative requirements for programs that have diminished somewhat. We go through the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification, a very important area in terms of our requirements in the labour force in our province, and we see some substantial changes in the area, an increase in spending for Apprenticeship and Trade Certification, but primarily it's an increase in one area, and I'll come to that area in vote 2.2.6.

I wanted to talk about the planning and development vote. There's a 60 percent increase of almost \$1 million. I'm wondering if it is indeed for technological change inside certain industries. We know that in a number of the existing proficiency trades that technology is taking over to a degree that some individuals involved are having some difficulty keeping up. Automotive mechanics, for example: it used to be that you could take your car into a garage and have it serviced. Now today with on-board computers that tend to operate the running of every automobile, mechanics almost have to have a background in computer technology before they can touch a wrench in order to fix the car. So I wonder if that particular vote is going to cover some of those planning and development programs that

are so very necessary for today's and tomorrow's work force.

The area of Access Initiatives. This seems to be a bit of a mind-boggling one for me, I must admit. We have an increase of 244 percent, taking it up an additional \$280,000, but for the life of me I couldn't find or be satisfied with any explanations of what the access initiatives mean. I would clearly and truly like to have an explanation of that particular vote because, as I say, I'm not satisfied with the information that was available.

An important area is Field Service Delivery. There's an area where we're cutting almost \$100,000, which is, I find, quite amazing. I'm told that some of the people that are now involved, employed by the department to go out and provide field services -- these folk are taking on new challenges. It used to be that an individual would go out and check people on the worksite that were involved in his or her trade. For example, a carpenter or an electrician would go out and take a look at the apprenticeship program inside the construction industry at worksites, examining or looking at only those carpenters or electricians that were involved in that particular trade.

I'm now advised that what goes on in field service delivery is that the field consultants go out and examine apprentices that are involved in five or six different trades. Some, in fact, have an academic background, but they have no idea about what the trade needs are, so they're going out and advising employers how to apply for certain programs without necessarily looking at what the needs of the trade are. They're not looking at the specific proficiency or certification process that so many of the apprentices are in. So that seems to be an area that we ought to be concerned about. We have a very high accident rate in the construction industry, and if we have an untrained or not fully qualified work force, I think it's incumbent upon the department to make sure in the delivery of field services that those folk that are going out to examine worksites and the apprentices on those worksites are fully and properly qualified to make that kind of an examination.

In vote 2.2.6, Employer Delivered Apprenticeship Training, we have, again, an increase of 400 percent. We've gone from half a million dollars to \$2.5 million. Now, Mr. Chairman, this is an area that causes me a great deal of concern, because I'm wondering about the duplication of services from the technical institutes -- Westerra, NAIT, SAIT -- where one goes in and takes programs, learns the theoretical side of their trade. And now we've got a practical side going on, but I worry: are we losing something to theory? Is something being lost there? What skills are being taught? How often does the department monitor the system? You know, when we've got employers delivering programs -- I've heard that in other jurisdictions where the delivery of training is being offered by an employer, the employer may very well only train what he specifically requires.

For example, if you require an electrician, what the employer may train is that part of that industry that teaches somebody to shove conduit down pipe, without ever looking at the other end of the trade. So you'd have somebody that's fully able to shove conduit down pipe without ever knowing the entire integration of the electrical system.

AN HON. MEMBER: Conduit is the pipe. You put the wire down the pipe.

MR. SIGURDSON: There you go. It tells you that I'm not in the trade.

Nonetheless, if that's all that's being offered, we had best be concerned about the status of that individual inside that trade. So I do wonder about the value that we're going to hopefully be getting through the employer delivered apprenticeship training program. Is it going to be the employer that does the examination? Is there going to be trade certification that follows after that? I don't see any announcements going along with this major increase in the employer delivered apprenticeship training program. Now, in some industries when one goes in as an apprentice, there's a practical side and the theoretical side. Who's going to be delivering what under this particular program? I think we need a great deal more information on this particular vote.

I'd also like to inquire about Apprenticeship Awareness. This is something new to the budget, something new to the department, and it just has \$600,000. I know that there was some note in the throne speech -- I think it was in the throne speech; it could have been in the budget -- about the apprenticeship awareness program but certainly not sufficient information going out.

In the next vote, Vocational Training, again it's a much, much larger budget than the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification portion of the budget, but it, too, has been cut by approximately \$3 million. The minister in the opening remarks said that rehabilitation, retraining, upgrading is an important component of the department, yet we see some rather substantial cuts in the vocational training program. Vote 2.3.3, Training Allowances and Assistance, falls from over \$20 million to just under \$18 million. Now, from the annual reports that are available -- the last year that annual reports were available, some 15,000 people were assisted through the moneys that were provided through this particular vote. If we have that kind of a cut -- one has to be concerned about a 12 percent cut -- one has to be concerned about how many positions are not going to be made available to Albertans next time round. Does it naturally flow that with a 12 percent cut in funding, we're going to have 10 to 12 percent cuts in positions being made available? Because if that's the case, we could have, well, if not thousands then it's certainly hundreds of people that would be applying for the program that wouldn't be able to access any money for it. So I'm wondering which programs in that will be affected and how many positions in training are going to be cut by that particular loss in funding.

Vote 2.3.6, Skill Enhancement and Retraining, has a cut of 43 percent, falling from \$3.2 million to \$1.85 million. I'm wondering -- again, we have a large cut there -- what is the anticipated need of the program. How many people are going to be turned away on this particular program? We see all kinds of television ads and we hear on the radio the need for retraining. We see in newspapers wonderful ads that are taken out by the government talking about retraining and how the government provides that, yet in the area of skill enhancement and retraining we have a cut. So what's the anticipated need of this particular area? Is the need so greatly reduced that we can afford to cut the budget by 43 percent?

In the area of vote 2.5, Industry Based Training, again we see a drop of 8.8 percent overall, but the drop, that amount of money, comes from the delivery side of the program. The programs that are being provided have been what's cut, not the administrative costs. Now, perhaps it's just simple mathematics or hope that one would think that when you have the cut in delivery, there would be a cut in administration as well, but that

doesn't seem to be the case. We have an increase of 5.5 percent for administration when we have a cut of about \$4 million in delivery of programs. We seem to be very top heavy when it comes to the bureaucrats taking over in particular departments. I think we certainly have to look for some more detail when it comes to the administration costs in this department relative to the delivery of service and programs.

The Opportunity Corps. It's a good program; it's a marvelous program. Just some very general questions about it. Again, I would hope that the minister might spend a little more time addressing the specifics of the program. I'd like to know how many people are assisted in this particular program, but more importantly how many people are turned away, if there are folk turned away. Is there a surplus left over at year-end? What's the effective rate of success? The people that are assisted on the Opportunity Corps program: the idea is to get them off of social assistance of sorts, whatever sort it may be, whatever format it comes in, but I'm wondering how many people are able to stay off of social assistance after they've gone through the Opportunity Corps.

Finally, with respect to Training and Career Services, under Career Assistance I see that in vote 2.7.1 the information services have gone up a quarter of a million dollars. Again, I'm curious to know why, what has changed in terms of having to try and get information out to individuals, why we have substantial increase in the information that needs to go out, when again the programs seem to have been cut. More information, more administration, fewer programs.

In vote 3, Employment Services, just a note that although it's not a substantial increase, the Administrative Support has gone up once again. Almost every time we turn around in the department, we see increased costs for administration. That's particularly disturbing in this particular vote because here we have employment programs that have been cut substantially. In the 1987-88 budget we had in the employment program some \$96 million available for programs that were offered through this department. Then the year following that was cut by \$20 million, down to \$76 million. This fiscal year, 1989-90, we see a further reduction to \$53.9 million.

Now, the minister talked about entry-level jobs in her closing remarks. A lot of the people that take advantage of PEP, STEP, ESP, ABC -- these are entry-level jobs; they are entry-level employment. Here we've taken a department and we've slashed \$23 million from it for what is probably normally an individual's first opportunity to go out and find employment. So we have on the one hand the minister saying that we'd like to have meaningful employment, we want to have people involved in the participation level of our province, in the work force, and yet we've taken away an awful lot of opportunity in terms of entry level. We've taken away \$23 million, in fact.

You know, it's all well and good to be glad that we have an unemployment rate that's seasonally adjusted at 6.9 percent, I believe, but the problem is that when you say 6.9 percent, you really don't know how many people are unemployed in our province. The fact is that seasonally adjusted we still have some 91,000 people unemployed and we're cutting back on employment programs for people that need to get back into the work force. Now, I saw last week the celebration on that side of the House when the question was asked -- it was put to the acting minister, the verbose Member for Barrhead -- about what the unemployment levels were. Everybody was happy that, boy, we only had 6.9 percent, but the fact is that there are 91,000 people

in our province that are still unemployed and looking for work. Young people between the ages of 16 and 24: we know full well that their level of unemployment is usually three to four points higher than what it is in the age level over 24. A lot of people who fall between that age of 16 to 24 look to ESP, they look to PEP, they look to the employment skills, and it's just not going to be there anymore. And that's worrisome.

The other worrisome side of the department -- as much as I want to see the program there, I want to make sure the program works. But I wonder about the monitoring of these moneys that we send out, seemingly without high regard. I wonder how often we monitor the programs. I asked that question a few years ago, and the previous minister said that we don't. We don't go out and we don't look at what we're getting back for the money that goes out. Well, do we know that people are acquiring skills? Or is it just hope, is it just prayer, is it just faith that we have that certain skills are going to be acquired if we give people money to throw out and to hire people?

I went through the supplementary information, and career development is almost every second department involved in the spending of money. I wonder what kind of skills are acquired at something called Pizza 73. We spent over \$13,000 there. What program was available, what monitoring was done there? At A-1 Submarine? Either somebody in the department has an awful lot of hunger, because we provide a great number of restaurants with an awful lot of money from Career Development and Employment, or we're just sending out an awful lot of money. One of the ones that popped out like a sore thumb was the Alberta Amateur Luge Association. They got \$149,000. What did we get for it? What did we get for \$149,000 for the Alberta Amateur Luge Association?

I see some very necessary institutions. Alberta Hospital Edmonton: they were funded for \$166,905. Now, I'm sure there was probably training going on. That's in my constituency; I've gone out there. But, you know, the monitoring of the program isn't in place. How often do we have people that are in the field going out to check on the commitment that is made by employers to provide training, if that's a component of the program that's being offered to the employer? It doesn't seem to happen at all. We're prepared to give money to the Royal Glenora: \$16,000. We're prepared to give money to the Edmonton Eskimos: 5,600 bucks. What did we get for that?

MR. TAYLOR: The Flames.

MR. SIGURDSON: No, the Flames weren't in there. But Albert's Restaurants: there's a good one; they got 90 grand. What did we get? More importantly, the employees whose wages were subsidized: what training did they get? After the program was over, was it a handshake and adios? I would hazard the guess -- I regret to have to hazard the guess -- that the department hasn't the statistics to advise us what we get on a lot of these programs.

Finally, I want to draw to the attention of the minister and ask a question. I've got two documents. This one's the annual report for the fiscal year '87-88, and this one's the Budget Address for this fiscal year, 1989. Now, in the Budget Address on page 19 the Treasurer said:

We have been encouraging social assistance recipients to seek employment through the employment alternatives program. This budget quadruples, to \$6 million, the funding for specialized assistance to help them prepare for

employment.

That's quadrupling an amount to \$6 million. Now, if my division still serves me well, that meant that there was a \$1.5 million amount in the previous year. Now, \$1.5 million available in the previous year. But in the annual report for 1988 we find that in the '87-88 employment alternatives program \$16,195,491 was expended. If you quadruple this amount, you're going to have \$64 million, which is already going to put you something like -- quick, quick, quick, quick -- \$9 million over budget in that one particular vote with nothing else left for employment skills: for STEP, for PEP, for ABC. Or is it that this program didn't exist? No, it had to exist; this is '87-88. So somewhere along the line either we're . . .

What are we quadrupling, \$1.5 million or \$16 million? Has the program changed? I want to know just what has changed inside the department. Did we drop from \$16 million one or two short fiscal years ago to \$1.5 million on this program, or are we in fact going to quadruple \$16 million? If we do quadruple that amount, and we'd automatically go over budget straight away, I want to know what's going to happen to PEP and STEP and ABC and all of the other programs that fall into that particular vote 3.2.2, because there's not enough money for all of the programs that have been promised. Either the printer made an error, the department made an error, or the Treasurer made an error, but there's somewhere an error, and I hope we get that particular error clarified tonight.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. TAYLOR: Brace yourselves.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah, here it comes; here it comes.

First of all, I'd like to congratulate the minister on her appointment to the post. It's nice to see we have a veteran in the position. I agree with you in your opening comments. I think this is probably one of the more important portfolios because it is a people service ministry, and I think that as long as we keep that in mind, then we can serve the public, which is what we are here for.

The Member for Edmonton-Belmont has raised a good number of the points that I was interested in raising, so I will edit my comments to things that are perhaps different from the points he raised.

In going through the votes, again I would like to echo my concern with respect to all votes -- 1, 2, and 3 -- that there is, I feel, too much emphasis on the administration of the program. I think what we need to look at more is the delivery of the services to the people that need it. Specifically, in section 2.1 I'm concerned when I see Program Support up 156 percent. Now, the percentage is a very dramatic number, and I don't think we need to dwell on that. We don't really need to dwell on the concept even that it's a little over \$350,000 or whatever. Actually, it's closer to \$400,000. I guess I'm concerned when the description says, "Administrative and other activities, the costs of which are not identified with individual . . . programs." That's quoted directly out of the estimates book. The lack of information that "other activities" suggests really leaves me questioning: what are other activities? You know, I'd like to see more information; I'd like to see more detail. Because I think as soon as

we leave things open to "miscellaneous," it starts to beg the question why we're seeing such a tremendous increase.

In vote 2.2 I was pleased to see an increase of 43 percent over the entire category. Obviously, this is the new apprenticeship work experience program, as mentioned in the throne speech. It was mentioned in the throne speech as a promise; it's come through. I compliment the government on following through on this. I think that's a good thing, that they are standing by their word at least in this area.

But there are some other things that I'm concerned about. The throne speech reads that apprenticeship programs will be in place wherever demand warrants. The question that that raises is: how are we going to determine where the demand will be? The final report of the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Review Committee called for an establishment of an industrial training advisory panel. It's supposed to have representatives from captains of industry and leaders of government. It went on to say that training will be more accurately articulated and a broad sense of ownership of the industrial training program will be fostered. So the questions I had that came out of that are simply: has the panel been set up? Has it been created yet? If not, when will it be and who will be on it? Which industries will be represented? Will the public have access? There's a number of questions like that. Basically, what's the scope of this advisory panel and what are they going to be doing?

Some other questions that came to mind: how will other departments with some obvious jurisdiction here work out a way to accommodate the program on policies? I understand that this panel is going to create policies, identify needs. So what's going to happen with the different areas? All of a sudden there's a need that's identified. How are they going to be able to respond to that? What kind of turnaround time are we going to have? If the advisory panel comes out and says, "We need more widget makers," how much time is it going to be before we have widget maker trainers established, or whatever the policies that are suggested?

I think something that's really lacking as I look through this is how the program is going to encourage and monitor participation of visible minorities: native people, the handicapped. It's obvious that occupations served by apprenticeships are currently mostly male dominated. I think there has to be some support for women, and I think we need to look at the needs of native people. Are there monitoring mechanisms in place? For example, it says under 2.2.4: a 245 percent, rounded off, increase to Access Initiatives. I guess I'm wondering a little bit: what are access initiatives and how is it going to work for us?

In identification of working and getting more people in the apprenticeship program, will the funding continue all the way through till the person gets a certificate? I'd hate to see an individual start under some training program, perhaps a four-year program, get funding for two years and then all of a sudden have the rug pulled out from underneath him. I'd like to see in here -- and it doesn't say it anywhere in here as far as I can tell -- some assurance that if a person starts in an apprenticeship training program and is relying on the funding being provided under this training program, he or she will have the opportunity to see that all the way through to completion, whether it's a two-year or a three-year or a four-year program. Not that I want to see people stretching it out and getting funding for 10 years, but I'd like to see people come out with a certificate or a trade ticket or whatever you want to call it so they have something they can work with.

The last section, 2.2.7, Apprenticeship Awareness, I see is a new category -- \$600,000. I guess what I'm thinking when I see that is that this sounds like a media relations kind of thing, and maybe this is \$600,000 that we could pass off onto the Public Affairs Bureau. Rather than the \$600,000 being allotted here, it could be allotted more for training programs, and perhaps Public Affairs could pick up that \$600,000. I'm not sure whether that's possible at this point or not.

Alberta Vocational Training. A little bit of a concern there: down almost 8 percent. It provides counseling to students, financial support to students, as well as training to disabled through the Alberta vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons. There are some real questions here. Why do we have a tremendous increase in 2.2.6 to apprenticeship training and then a cut to the Alberta Vocational Training? The indication today is that there is going to be increased demand for vocational needs. The Education minister is working on something called the IOP program, which is a vocational program to help students get more vocational training. The Education minister is recognizing the need for it. I think we need to have more of it following students' completion of their secondary schooling. I think we need some more dollars infused in this area.

Section 2.3.3, Training Allowances and Assistance: down almost 12 percent, a drop of \$2.5 million. Skill Enhancement and Retraining drops a total of 43 percent, a drop from \$3.2 million down to \$1.8 million. That's a drop of about \$1.4 million, a tremendous decrease when we find that people are finding themselves inappropriately trained and needing to retrain. So we need to increase those areas. Another question that came to mind is: how is it the department recognized last year that students in the program were in tremendous need of assistance and allocated an extra \$2.7 million, and now we have a sudden change in direction? I'm concerned about that sort of thing happening.

With respect to the disabled, it seems that we should be spending more time communicating with these, and I guess I have a question for the minister. Was there communication with the disabled regarding the cuts in funding to disabled training? Cuts to rehabilitation programs are particularly harmful to a group that's struggling to become more integrated in our society. Rather than cutting them off short, we need to be helping them and developing them more.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please, in the back row. The subcommittee meetings are getting a little loud.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd be curious to know how the Premier's commission on the status of disabled persons would view the cuts that have been outlined in this particular section under Alberta Vocational Training. An 8 percent cut overall may not seem like much, but in a community that's had to fight very hard for recognition, opportunity, and assistance, it's not the time to cut them off. We need to be helping them, not cutting them down.

If you look overall in vote 2 there are seven sections that deal with training -- I won't list them all -- a number of them which show an increase, and for those I applaud the minister and the government for increasing those particular areas. But on the other side of the coin, there are a number of areas that show a distinct cut. If we add them all up, of the seven areas we end up with a net training reduction of almost \$3.6 million. I think at a time when society as a whole is becoming more technical,

requiring more training, a reduction in training allowances is a regressive step. Although the section 2.2.6, Employer Delivered Apprenticeship Training, has increased 400 percent, overall we're actually seeing a decrease in training allowances, and I'm most concerned about that.

If we look down at 2.6.2., this section, Employment Counseling and Relocation Services, has been eliminated altogether. I find it hard to believe that the need for employment counseling has suddenly vanished. I'm wondering if it has resurfaced somewhere or has been reallocated somewhere. The budget was not large -- \$381,000 last year -- and this year it's gone. So I'm concerned about employment counseling. What happens to those people who find themselves out of work and are looking for some assistance, and funding for this particular area has disappeared?

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

Going on to vote 3, again a total cut overall: 24.6 percent Employment and Agency Support is an area of immediate concern, as pointed out by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont. In the 1987-88 year we had a cut from that year to last year of 17 percent. The cut we have this year represents another cut of 28.5 percent, and this includes PEP and STEP, very successful programs. This is quite a substantial cut, because many of the people who are employed in this are students that are facing increasing tuition costs, increased living expenses as they go to university, increased expenses in textbooks and general university supplies. If we go back to 1987-88, we've had a cut of \$40 million in this program, and as I understand it, the demand for this program has virtually tripled. So with reducing the total number of dollars that are in here and increasing demand, the percentage we're satisfying with this is actually becoming smaller and smaller.

The net result, of course, is that it becomes more difficult for our students to go to university, and the net result is that perhaps we may end up in an position where we find ourselves with fewer graduates trained and ready to enter the work force. So the question that came out of there is: is there a contingency plan or is there an alternative strategy for providing employment opportunities for youth? The demand is there; I'm sure the minister has seen the stacks of applications for STEP and PEP positions. The dollars simply aren't there, so we've got to help our students some way. I spent enough years at university; I know what it's like.

There are many benefits to STEP, to PEP. There were some things that I know I'm concerned about. Is there a monitoring system in place, an enforcement to ensure that the dollars that are spent, which are becoming fewer every year, it seems -- what percentage of these dollars are spent wisely in terms of getting value for the money? What percentage of the program is followed up and monitored? What actions does the department take when there's been abuse, and how frequently has abuse occurred? Have dollars been given to, as the Member for Edmonton-Belmont pointed out, perhaps some questionable locations? What about the number of people or number of positions that an agency or a company has granted from year to year?

Within my own constituency, for example, the community of Silver Springs has in the past received funding for up to 10 STEP positions during the summertime to run their community facilities. This year they're reduced to three positions. This has

a tremendous impact upon their being able to offer the programs to the community that they've had in the past. They open a swimming pool that they run for the community for the entire city, so it becomes more difficult for them.

Employment alternatives program. I've heard great things about it. I've already heard a little bit about it in terms of dollars here; it's been quadrupled to \$6 million. I couldn't find where it was listed, so I wish that it had been identified in here somewhere. I wasn't sure where it was. The concern that I had about it is that we still don't know whether the jobs created under the employment alternatives program are permanent jobs or, now that it's been running for a while, are we seeing a cycle of getting on the EAP and then ending up on unemployment insurance and then back to EAP for a while and back to unemployment insurance? Are we seeing a cycle like that, or are these permanent jobs? And of the permanent jobs, what kind of rate are we talking about? Are we talking minimum salary, \$4.50 an hour kind of jobs? Are we talking jobs that require any kind of training skill? I'd like to know a little bit more about the kinds of jobs that have come out of the employment alternatives program. As far as I know, I haven't seen any public evaluation of the program. I'd like to see sort of where it has gone. Why hasn't there been a public evaluation?

The former minister announced in March of 1988 that one out of every three dollars in the employment alternatives program's budget would go to provide additional training. I'd like to know when that training would be implemented. Are there any specific guidelines relating to who will provide the training? What are the certifications required of the people that are providing the training? Are these people that have a certificate of some kind themselves in the particular area? Are they masters? I don't know. What is their certification? Again, going back to the employment alternatives program, are the jobs helping to maintain full-time employment after the grant period ends? We don't want these people to be bouncing around and getting on a treadmill, as I mentioned earlier.

Demographics is a bit of a concern. Who are the types of individuals that are being employed? Are these the people that are the difficult to employ or the easily employable? What about the plan to subsidize welfare recipients to start their own businesses? And if we're going to have welfare recipients starting their own businesses, what kind of training will be provided to them? Not just the dollars -- it's very easy to give dollars -- but I think the thing that's more important in this particular situation would be how we can ensure that the people that receive the dollars have the training and the knowledge and the wherewithal to actually run the business, be successful, and add to the economy rather than detract from it.

Again, as I mentioned earlier, there's no mention of any kind of training for native peoples. Has the department addressed itself to the particular problems of native people? What about native women, who I think are even more disadvantaged in many cases? Last I heard, at the Gleichen reserve east of Calgary there was a 90 percent unemployment rate. Although clearly the needs of natives are different, a 90 percent unemployment rate -- although Alberta's rate of 6.9 percent is admirable and certainly an improvement over what we've had in the past, the needs of natives I don't believe are being met.

Immigration and Settlement Services. A good increase here. My compliments to the minister. I think there are some positive initiatives that are happening here. I think the comments I would make again deal with immigrant women. Immigrant

women make up a higher percentage of the labour force, in participation, than Canadian-born women. Because of the nature of immigrant women, the majority of whom are classified as dependant or they are sponsored by someone, they have a difficulty in learning the language, and they need access to ESL, English as a Second Language, programs. I'm sure everyone in the House here has met people that when you ask how long they've been in Canada, they say they've been here 10 years or 12 years, and yet they hardly speak a word of English. I'm concerned about that, not from the standpoint that I want them to lose their heritage, but I'd like to feel that those people are feeling integrated and a part of our society. They need to have access. These women that are staying at home need to have access to ESL programs. So my question to the minister is: will an increase to immigration services be allocated to provide ESL for all immigrants, not just -- I think in the past it was primarily for the male wage earner. [interjection] All right. Good.

I was a little bit concerned about the delivery mechanism. Again dealing with immigrant women, I think many of them feel very uncomfortable in terms of going out of their community. I'd like to be reassured by the minister, hopefully, that these courses will be offered perhaps in their neighbourhood school or their local community hall or something close by, so these immigrant women can find a place that's close, that's convenient, that they feel comfortable in, that they feel safe in going to and get the service that they need.

Last year the former Minister of Career Development and Employment said that there was an ESL secretariat; representatives from five government departments were co-ordinating ESL activities. My question is: is this secretariat still meeting? Are they monitoring the ongoing work of the Immigration and Settlement Services?

There are just a few concluding comments. Since the early 1980s the rate of part-time employment has increased by about 10 times the rate of full-time employment. As a result, it's changing the nature of today's labour force. The concern I have here is that many of these part-time employees don't have the benefits available to them that full-time employees have. I hope that the minister for career development is keeping that in mind, so that we can make sure that our part-time workers are treated on an equitable basis. There was an announcement by the Employment Standards Code that states

We're moving from a different social environment, and certainly we will want to have legislation that will help us through the next few years.

That's very encouraging, but I'd like to know what is the long-term policy regarding the growing rate of part-time employment. Seventy-two percent of the part-time employees are women. What's the long-term policy in that direction?

In conclusion, then, I see some very positive aspects. I think there is some room for improvement in terms of wages. Wage hikes in Alberta have been quite low with respect to wage hikes elsewhere in the country. I hope that the minister will remember that we have a people service here, a people ministry, and that we will continue to work to develop those training programs that the people of Alberta need.

Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Would the hon. minister like to respond?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'll respond to some of the

questions now, if I can, because I'm running out of room on my desk to keep track of them.

First of all, there were some questions common to both members of the opposition. One related to the administration. I think that if you'll look all the way through, almost totally the administration is related to the bargaining process and the settlements there that would increase it, as well as some electronic data processing. The one that I think leaps out -- and I apologize for not having gone over some of the highlights, which I intended to do -- there was a consolidation in vote 2.1 of the advertising in that vote. The advertising, which had been spotted throughout various votes before, was all brought into vote 2.1. I hope, for comparison purposes, that next year it will be the same, and you'll be able to see year over year how we've expended those funds.

Let me just touch on some of the highlights, and I think it will answer some of the questions.

The overall reduction in the employment support, which I should have explained, because the reduction was 28.5 percent . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could we have order in the committee, please, so that we can hear the minister? Thank you.

MRS. OSTERMAN: The Alberta wage subsidy program, which might be the quotes that came from the different people that were funded -- I'm not sure where the hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont was getting his information, but it could be from this particular program. It's been canceled, and so there is a \$10 million drop immediately for that particular item. There was an increase of \$4 million which relates to the farm employment program, and I might say, Mr. Chairman, that that's the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. Order please.

Back to you, Madam Minister.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you. This program has been incredibly successful. The take-up was such that in a very short while it was fully subscribed, and we've had many, many people still looking to apply. So that's something that we'll have to review next year in terms of the type of employment that actually occurred and the quality of the work experience of the people who utilize this particular program.

The continuation of the employment alternatives program. You will see, even with two particular items that were changed, that it's down. In the areas where you see the program dollars down, what we did was reflect that actual experience from this past year. Given that our labour statistics are improving very much, we wanted more targets, specific areas for the dollars that were available. So we have reflected in the training allowance and all of the other things what is the actual participation of this last year. We think, with the forecast in terms of employment opportunities, that this trend to a downturn will continue.

The employment alternatives program obviously deserves an explanation. There was \$6 million transferred from that area to another, and that dealt with the pre-employment part of the employment alternatives program. I apologize for the wording in the Treasurer's address, because they took the program as a whole and did not describe that it was a component of that program that was quadrupled. I think the hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont picked that up and said, "Which one of

these figures is it?" It was the pre-employment aspect of it

In the employment alternatives program there were a number of things, certainly, that we picked up, and if I can just give you some of the statistics . . . In fact, they were not the easily employed. The longer people are on social allowance, I think we know, the more difficult for them to get back into the work force. There's a whole host of things that are barriers. Indeed, employers have to be enticed, if you will, into trying to work with people who will take awhile to bring up to speed for any particular job. So a good many of these people certainly would be the hard to employ.

We've got some statistics here; there was a survey done. This is from late '88, from the survey. Seventy-eight percent of the employees were social allowance recipients prior to entering the employment alternatives program. Of course, there were a number of people, as well, who would have been on unemployment insurance; I'm gathering that's where the other was. Seventy-three percent of the approved positions were in industries such as retail trade, 24 percent; accommodation, food, and beverage, 13 percent; manufacturing, 13 percent; construction, 9 percent; business service, 8 percent; and wholesale trade, 6 percent. Seventy-five percent of the approved positions were in the following occupations specifically: clerical, 26 percent; sales, 15 percent; product fabricating, 14 percent; service, 13 percent; and construction, 7 percent.

There are a number of other statistics, Mr. Chairman, but I think it's important to note that in the longer term history of these people who accessed the program, the prognosis was fairly good because of those continuing to stay in the labour force. There were 51 percent of the employees who were male, and 49 percent were female. Average age was 31 years; 41 percent of the employees were single, 31 percent were married, and 28 percent were separated, widowed, or divorced. Some interesting stats, Mr. Chairman, and I think we need to still do a better job of follow-up to see the kinds of situations in the various types of employment, see what it was that was conducive for those who are managing to stay in the employment field over the longer term and what it was that worked out for them. I know that each individual is different, but I think we could probably still do a better job of gathering information.

In terms of training support, Mr. Chairman, we have an additional \$2 million in the skill shortages apprenticeship program. There's one item -- I think it shows up as \$2.5 million, or something to that effect. The \$2 million is for the government portion. We have a good many skilled journeymen people in the employ of government, and certainly I think we're in an ideal position to open up our area and bring people into the apprenticeship program and utilize the skilled people that are available who are working for government. We must continually advertise and make employers aware of the potential of their participating in the program.

One area where it was employer driven -- it seems to me that that was basically for . . . I think it might have been beauticians and that type of thing. There's a small program there that we're trying out. But remember, at all times, in the end the testing for apprenticeship must be done by us; in other words, to measure the skills and the information acquired.

Oh, yes, the one area where you spoke about access initiatives. We've got a budget up 244.8 percent. We were trying to promote equal access for women, disabled, natives, and so on. We believe this requires a concerted effort so that employers, when they're thinking about the potential employees, will

visualize a whole spectrum of the possibilities in the labour force and not what sometimes is viewed as your more traditional workers.

I believe I have addressed the administration. I think it's important to note that when we're looking at the programs -- I gather there's some concern about us being able to monitor and so on. Notwithstanding the fact that access has been down in some areas, we continue with basically our same complement of administration in place because, indeed, we expect that we'll be able to do a better job. So I'm hoping that that will prove its worth, and that we'll have better statistics and information in another year to make a judgment on how well we're doing in the various programs. So on one hand -- you can't have your cake and eat it too -- you're critical of administration, but I think that if we're spread too thin, we don't have the information that hon. members would like in terms of discussing the programs we've put in place.

I made the point about our field services not being diminished. Mr. Chairman, I think I have covered a fair number of the points that were made. The immigration area was an important one. We are increasing support to settlement agencies. As a matter of fact, we're going to be adding two additional programs in Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie. The hon. Member for Calgary-North West, I believe it was, mentioned English as a Second Language. Indeed, the comments we heard were that immigrant women were being left out. There's a very special encouragement there. I'll take under advisement your comments about where the programs should occur and find out precisely what is being planned. The agencies that work with our immigrant population are very skilled, seem to be very close to the people, and that's obviously important in terms of their level of comfort and how it is that we will deliver these services. But if hon. members have some sense from their working with our immigrant population as to how this might occur, obviously I'm very open to suggestions.

I look forward to additional comments and questions, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Madam Minister. The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As others who have spoken before, I'd like to begin by complimenting and congratulating the minister on her appointment as the Minister of Career Development and Employment.

With respect to the programs that are in existence, my major concern is on behalf of the constituents of Banff-Cochrane, in particular the young people of our constituency and those young people who find their way into our constituency during the summer periods especially, but in point of fact, on a 12-month basis. These are the young people who come into a tourist area and provide the services that allow our province to continue to promote tourism and bring that program forward in a meaningful manner. So I am commending the department for what has gone on before, and I would like to ask the minister to make perhaps some comments on her initiatives for the future with respect to, in particular, career development for young people and employment opportunities in Banff-Cochrane. Because this is an area that I've not particularly had a lot of time with, I don't want to waste the time of this Assembly this evening. So I think I'll just leave that with the minister, with my congratulations, and perhaps she might offer some comments on it in the future.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I recognize the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to raise a specific problem I have with the Department of Career Development and Employment on this occasion, given that the minister and the various speakers have acknowledged that there is no automatic monitoring mechanism for the administration of PEP, STEP, or ESP grants, or as the new MLA for Edmonton-Jasper Place once said to me, "PEP, STEP, LEAP, and flip." One gets really wrapped up in these acronyms.

But in fact there's an important matter that I believe needs to be shared here in the context of the absence of monitoring ability, and that is instances of abuse. Now, last year I raised with the former minister an example of an employer who hired a person under STEP, I believe it was -- I'd have to check my records; I didn't bring that file up -- who was told to do Conservative Party work while on the job. I raised the matter in the House, and the minister at that time agreed to meet with the woman, which he did do, and nothing came out of it. But I think it pointed to examples of the need for monitoring.

Now, I have another example, Mr. Chairman. The people who raised this with me wanted desperately for me to raise this tonight, as the paper war during the last several months has brought no genuine dialogue or response from either this minister or her predecessor in the portfolio. I understand the complication. I appreciate the correspondence from the current minister, and I realize that she was not minister at the time this was happening and sort of inherits the problem, but nonetheless I think it deserves an answer.

The issue is this, Mr. Chairman. An organization of herbalists in Alberta, which is a registered organization, elects its representatives at their annual general meetings. That's as per the Societies Act, and that's the way we all operate. Now, two members of this association, I understand . . . In fact I'm positive, because I've talked to representatives from within the minister's department who confirm that two representatives from this association declared themselves to be elected officials representing the organization with the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs societies registries, and on that basis made claim to certain PEP and STEP grants last year and this year, which they were subsequently granted. Now, when the registered association's elected officials living in Calgary found out about this -- the claimant is living in Edmonton -- they wrote to the minister's department and said: "Slow down, gang. These people aren't authorized by our association to hire anybody under any program. They are not the elected officials." So I can assure you, I'm not joking about the paper wars business. There have been a lot of letters transmitted back and forth between the Calgary office, my office, this minister's office, her predecessor's office, and the whole circuit in between, not to mention within the department itself.

The matter has resolved itself to this. Career Development and Employment says: "How can we possibly monitor everything? How can we know if somebody is fraudulently registering themselves with the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs?" So the responsibility rests with Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Consumer and Corporate Affairs says: "We don't have time to confirm all of this. We just have to take these applications or these statements at face value, unless dem-

onstrated otherwise."

So the man who brought all this information to my attention says, rightly so: "Okay. I think you should have some monitoring. Obviously, there will be instances of abuse that could not be weeded out, but why is it that the department doesn't act, once the instances of potential abuse have been identified?" And I think he's right. He phoned me a few weeks ago. He said: "Pam, you know, I got the latest cheque for this outfit. Now, instead of going to the guy who declared himself to be an elected representative of this herbalist association, it's coming to me." He said, "You know, this is not right, because I didn't apply for this money and I didn't apply to have a STEP or PEP employee doing so-called research." So I convinced him to send it back to the department. I talked to department officials again.

What I'm getting at is -- I'm not arguing that there are a million instances of this type of abuse, Madam Minister. What I am arguing is that we don't know about them until they come to our attention, which I think, number one, demonstrates the need for some form of monitoring but, number two, demonstrates the need for some sort of commitment throughout various departments to co-operate once a problem has been identified. This has gone back and back and forth . . . Oh, pardon me. Would the minister like copies of the letters? Yes. Sorry about that. Could I have a page, please?

What I'm pointing out is that when you do get instances, surely it tells you where some weaknesses are and that we need some departmental co-operation so that we can discourage abusers. I realize it's impossible to anticipate every single need when you've got a large department and a whole bunch of programs, but surely when we've got this -- and it's been going on for months and months now -- we need to act upon it. I'll give the minister just a minute to have a look at that.

I would like to make one other observation, and I do look forward to a response. I believe that she has the best interests of these programs at heart, but one other political point I think really needs to be made is in reference to vote 2.2. I see that Apprenticeship and Trade Certification is showing a 43 percent increase. Now, I listened to her comments when she was responding to the other members who had spoken earlier, and I didn't catch a reference to that.

Now, I have no objection to an increase. But I wonder if this government would like to undertake a review of the effects of its own legislation insofar as it drove out of the province so many trained tradespeople, and if now, having driven down the wages and benefits accruing to those people since 1984 and the original onset of Bill 110 after the escape clause had been exercised by employers for nearly a year and in the context of Bills 20 and 21, which were introduced and approved only by closure, I'm sorry to say, last year -- if in fact the Conservative government had not insisted on attempting to erode the income and benefits earning ability of tradesmen, would we not have saved the Alberta taxpayers a fair amount of money in the long run and not needed to show this type of increase in Apprenticeship and Trade Certification? Which is not to say that I object to it if it is caused by any other cause, but if it is caused by what I believe was a clear political attempt to erode the bargaining rights and living standards of trained tradespeople between 1983 and 1988, then you've got a monster problem on your hands so far as the taxpayers are concerned, and you might want to look in the future to improving the labour legislation so that you don't have to look at purging our skilled workers every five or 10 years according to an economic ebb or tide. I think it's shortsighted and

a mistake. In any event, that was the political observation.

I'd sure like to hear from the minister with respect to the other point.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to offer my congratulations to the hon. minister. I think we are very, very fortunate to have had the minister as a legislator for this province in the various portfolios she has fulfilled, and at this time I think it's a very, very suitable appointment. I feel very confident that she has an important role to play in a very, very important ingredient that we need at this time. I don't think I have to wish her well, because I know she's going to do very well, and we look forward to working very closely with her.

I think the important aspect and the important thing we have to recognize is just what is our greatest resource. I think our greatest resource is our people, and the second greatest thing we can demand from our greatest resource is their work ethics. In my time I've had the opportunity of traveling, particularly through Japan and Taiwan. I spent some time there, and I think you really appreciate and you really recognize and you really come home with a firm appreciation of just what the true meaning is of a people resource. With career development, that's how we put the people resource in place, and the work ethics that we have to demand from these people.

So at this stage again I'd like to reiterate that I'm particularly pleased to see the hon. minister in charge of this particular portfolio, because I know she's going to achieve, and I know we're going to all be better for this particular department.

I think one of the important things that I would like to see developed -- I think it's something that has to come about, and perhaps it's not just in the area of career development but it's one that's going to have to come together with education and with economics, with various portfolios: economics and trade. I think we're going to have to have all three groups come together and start developing our trend of thought and our career development at perhaps a bit of an earlier age. I have seen a little bit of the process of the business incubators, of the business development centres. They really start at a younger age; they start with the school children. They can be applicable to those who have graduated from the scholastic system, but by and large they do start with our school children. They take the children who are interested, provide the atmosphere and provide the facilities to actually become an entrepreneur or a sole businessperson. I think it's important that we start adapting that type of thinking into our school system.

I think if we do that, we can accomplish several things. We can actually start developing entrepreneurs who can go out and hone their business skills at an early age and become true businesspeople. If we don't achieve that, we can achieve another thing that I think is so important and so lacking in our generation of people today, and that is the whole philosophical attitude of an employer rather than employee. By that I think this is key and very important, and it expands the relationship. As these people go through life, whether they are an employer or an employee, they have a better understanding of each other's needs. I think in that sense we have to start working on that as well.

So I would like to see some thought given, Madam Minister, to the approach of perhaps developing the business incubator, the business generator systems within our schools and across the province really. It's being utilized to a degree in Ontario at the present time. It's an extremely successful program where it is being used. I think we're lacking some opportunities here in that we haven't built on that opportunity that can indeed exist. So I would hope that perhaps, Madam Minister, together with your people you will spend a little time in considering this opportunity that perhaps we could dwell on and perhaps build on.

With that I'll close. I thank you for hearing me out.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I will just make a few responses. I found some notes from the previous participants.

Calgary-North West, I did have a few more points that I wanted to make as a result of what you raised. I believe the hon. member raised what will be the points made by the Premier's commission and how we'll be responding to the disabled community. Certainly we will be in very close touch with the commission with the kind of ideas that we have, and I'm certainly not shy at all. If in the middle of the year there are obvious opportunities that we can provide for the abilities of our disabled, we'll certainly respond, and we look to that type of information coming forward. It isn't always timely in terms of the budget process, and so that's how we'll handle it.

Somebody else, as well, mentioned the number of part-time workers. I think it was the hon. Member for Calgary-North West. I think you will see that trend changing. I think our last statistics saw something like a drop of 5,000 in the part-time work force and, of course, an incredible increase in the full-time participants, and that I believe augurs well for everyone, particularly the workers.

In relationship to the information that has come from the apprenticeship board and the kinds of recommendations that have been made -- very frankly, I am hesitant to launch into wholesale changes at this point in time. I'm sure there's a number of just tremendous recommendations, but the apprenticeship area is just critical. It is one of the most important in the province. Over the longer haul it is a program that's been in place for over 40 years and has seen an evolution to meet the needs of workers and industry in this province. So I will need a number of months to become acquainted with all the facets of the various sectors that are in the apprenticeship area to make sure that we don't make any precipitous moves that in any way would harm the opportunities or the reputation, the very good reputation, that our apprentices enjoy right across Canada. So while I am certainly cognizant of the recommendations, I will not act hastily, Mr. Chairman. It's one of those things where a new minister has come on the scene and we're going to have to have a certain hiatus before they're acted on.

In the apprenticeship area, just a reminder for all members. The apprenticeship is paid by his or her employer, and we certainly hope to be able to say "her" employer more often. There are many of us who didn't realize we were participating in non-traditional areas until we got off the farm and found out that others didn't do it. I think there are a good many women that because they've somehow absorbed sort of a traditional attitude about where people are employed, really haven't thought about their opportunities in many of the trade areas. I hope we'll see that change. There's been some progress, but I hope we'll see that change.

Now, while the apprentices are in a postsecondary institution

for the academic portion of their training, the federal government, through special arrangements under the unemployment insurance program, then is able to handle that particular area. Now, for the part of the provincial government, we are responsible for contracting or paying for all the education that the apprentices must take. So there are literally three portions to the apprenticeship program, and we will continue to participate as necessary. As I said, I hope that we see so-called jobs that have been nontraditional either through culture or gender, that we will see a change in that.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands raised the herbalists, and I did recall, as I see my letter to you, that particular situation. I didn't realize that there was an ongoing component of the program. I am aware, as a result of my past experience, of the hundreds of thousands of individual organizations that are registered under Consumer and Corporate Affairs. So that information is accepted and taken as is. We run into a situation like this where apparently there is a conflict between who it is that is supposedly recognized on behalf of the association. The information I received from the department indicated one factor that was very important, and that is that in terms of the money that flowed, the people actually were employed and utilized for what it was that was described. So I take some level of comfort in that. But I am concerned, as obviously the hon. member is, about whatever the internal situation is with respect to the association, and I'm hoping that if there's a role for us to play, we might look at it.

The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane raised what is obviously an area that is near and dear to his heart with respect to tourism. I would say that, as always, I keep finding out about the wonderful things the department is doing and all of the other people in a very co-operative fashion through various departments and so on, which we must continue to do to keep apace of the needs. I find a number of things that we are doing in this area and am obviously very pleased about it. We've estimated that some 2,500 individuals employed in the tourism sector have received counseling assistance in this past year. As well, we estimate that about 1,600 positions in the tourism industry received job-creation or training funding. The funding allocated apparently was approximately three and a half million dollars. In combination with the Alberta Tourism Education Council -- hon. Member for Red Deer-North is nodding, having been an integral part of that body -- we have published a brochure speaking about careers in tourism. Obviously, the very basic thing we must do, in terms of our young people in particular, is to talk about the career opportunities in tourism. Because it's like any other area: you start out at some kind of entry level, given that your skills would be minimal, and when you move on from there, I think you can see there are many, many opportunities in this particular area. There are something like, as I understand, 25 entry-level positions in the tourism sector.

Now, the labour market industry analysis and training information branch are in the process of completing a study of the career paths in tourism. As we utilize the career and life management course in our high schools, I think we've got to do a better job of giving the whole spectrum of opportunities and especially the emerging industries in our province, with tourism being one of the major ones. We've spoken about it often in this House. If the minister were here -- and I guess it's because he sits beside me, I am hearing about it constantly and being reminded about my work and the efforts the department must make in alerting people to the opportunities in this industry.

One comment about some points made by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands that I must take strong exception to, and that is that somehow we've trained people and have then just shipped them out of the province because of the structure we have in our industry, the wages that are paid and so on. Well, I think all hon. members who have been paying any attention at all would realize that we did have a downturn in our economy. We had, as we have talked about so often, and I know the opposition yawns . . . When you take a look at what happened with the national energy program -- and I have perfect examples in my own constituency in Airdrie. I know so many of those young people that came here and took apprenticeship training had their hopes and their dreams absolutely shattered because the energy industry in this province went down from north to south, east to west. If you take a look at the ripple effect of that, it's obvious jobs are going to be lost, whether it's building houses for families, whether it's in the plants that don't go ahead because of what happened. I would say to all hon. members that the training of those people will never be lost. They are being utilized in other parts of Canada, and we are seeing an increase in immigration to this province. We're probably breaking even now in terms of interprovincial immigration where we should soon be a net benefactor. In terms of overall immigration, we now have a net increase.

So I think all hon. members will recognize that jobs aren't always exactly where you want them at any time in history in a country or in a province. So we have to move with them. We have seen the pioneers who came to Alberta and built this province move because they saw opportunities. I hope with the kind of recognition of the trade skills that are acquired by Alberta apprentices, we see these people employed in other areas. I'm happy they are employed in other areas and that we have been able to enhance their employability, but I can assure all hon. members that I am expecting as well to see many of them back because of the employment opportunities in Alberta. We will look forward as well to training more apprentices to take advantage of those opportunities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to begin by complimenting the minister on her appointment to this challenging portfolio. I've had the opportunity to work with the minister since she was first elected in 1979, through a variety of portfolios, and I do extend to her my very best wishes.

I would like to concentrate my focus -- and I'll be brief, Mr. Chairman -- on one particular area in the department, and that is STEP, the summer temporary employment program. The program as announced by the hon. minister's predecessor back in March called for an investment of some \$22.5 million in the program for the year, and I note in the same release that the 1988-89 budget for STEP was some \$20 million. So we were looking at an increase of \$2.5 million for the program. The objectives are, of course, very laudable, among them to assist our youth in terms of the future health and prosperity of our province, to assist in the job experience for tomorrow's workplace, and job creation. We're looking at some 7,300 Alberta students who would be able to participate in that activity through the summer.

My concern to the minister is: with the increased budget and with these expectations, why are we receiving so many concerns from local organizations, whether they be town councils or

county councils or other bodies that traditionally have worked with the department and have obtained STEP students? I look at correspondence from the village of Warner, where the concern is that their allocation was cut by 50 percent. They speak of the hardship that places not only on the students in the community, some of whom have relied on this employment in their community, but on the community itself. They refer to it as a terrible blow to most small villages and towns in rural Alberta. They make reference to the adverse effect it's having in terms of their inability to maintain some of their local parks and recreation facilities.

The county of Lethbridge wrote to the minister and expressed concerns about the cutback in funding and specifically alluded to some parks. In the town of Taber reference is made to the fact that over time STEP students have done a lot of the fine, detailed work in over a hundred acres of parks within the town -- one hundred acres of parkland. Now, this is in addition to the town's normal employees. So it's not a case of the town turning over an entire responsibility to STEP students; it's a supplement to what is otherwise being done. Without the assistance of STEP, some of this work is not being done, and we see a decline in new projects.

The town of Milk River expressed concerns. During the past year there were four full-time positions and two part-time positions, both working in outdoor park areas, as well as two of the full-time positions as senior guards at the pool working under a manager in terms of their job experience and assisting. Because as all members know, municipal pools do not make money; they do not break even. It's a cost drain on a municipality, so any assistance that can be provided is, of course, appreciated.

Now, what I'm concerned about is the response the minister gave to one of these municipalities, because reference is made to the distribution of 1989 STEP positions for municipal governments based on two conditions. The first condition is the historical criteria, the historical participation, the municipalities have had in the program, and the second being population size. It's population size that gives me greatest concern, Madam Minister, because if we're going to look at programs based on the size of the community only and not take into account the overall area that community serves, because it might be a small town but might be serving a large rural population, then there's inequity built in. And we refer further in the correspondence to 1989 being a year of transition. If it is indeed the minister's intent to look at it on a constituency by constituency basis in terms of population, that's one thing. That's something we can all work with, and the concerns I expressed about some of these smaller communities can indeed be addressed.

It's also important to recognize that under STEP we're not only speaking of the towns and other organizations, because there are really three elements in the program: career and work experience, summer farm, and provincial government departments. I was referring primarily to career and work experience, which includes municipalities, postsecondary institutions, nonprofit societies, Indian bands, Metis settlements, and publicly funded agencies such as school boards and hospitals. When we look at the division of funds between those three categories under STEP, we see that approximately \$14.2 million has been allocated to career and work experience, \$500,000 to the summer farm element, and \$7.8 million to our own government departments. I'd further suggest that the minister give consideration to: if there has to be some cutting back or some paring down -- and I still don't understand, if the budget for

STEP has gone from \$20 million last year to \$22.5 million this year, how there can be that paring down. I recognize that our minimum wage has gone up, but I still look at one community which last year had four full-time positions and two part-time and this year has been allocated three and a half positions. There's something missing in the equation. But if there must be a paring down of the activities, then let it be in the departments of this government. Let it be here where we see that and not on our municipalities, not on our nonprofit agencies, not on our local hospital boards and schools boards. I would respectfully request that this area be reviewed by the minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So many members have made congratulatory comments to the new minister that I guess it's almost trite to do so. But as a fellow member of the class of '79, I would like to say that I think our new Minister of Career Development and Employment is the right minister for this department at this time.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to share with the members of the committee a conversation I had last night with a number of my constituents who attended my constituency association annual meeting. A number of them expressed their concern, indeed even their dismay, with respect to our provincial budget. As I tried to get to the bottom of those concerns and that dismay, the recurring expressions were your 7 percent increase in expenditures and your lack of resolve in dealing with your current deficit and your accumulated debt. These are not isolated comments. These are, of course, coming from a number of acquaintances and friends from across the city of Calgary. So in that context, how pleased I was to note that in the Career Development and Employment budget, in the total amount to be voted there is a reduction of better than 10 percent. I know that the constituents of Calgary-Fish Creek would want me to say to this minister our plaudits for having the resolve, the wherewithal to pare her departmental estimates by 10 percent. Now, I don't know whether that resolve comes from within or from without, but I don't care much about the motivation. I am pleased to see that result. However, in subsequent review of the estimates of the department, how disappointed I was to see how this 10 percent reduction had been in fact achieved.

I don't want to simplify the discussion tonight, but the evening is late and this member is flagging. So let me just observe that in vote 3, which is Employment Services, those services that are the underlying rationale for the Department of Career Development and Employment, we find that their vote has been reduced by 24 percent. I have some difficulty with that when I take a look at vote 1, Departmental Support Services. Are these the services out in the field? No, these are the services that are very, very close to home -- indeed, the minister's office, her deputy's office, and some other close to home functions called finance and admin, planning and research, policy and program development, and field services support. I know that my constituents would want me to ask the minister: what criteria did she and her senior officials use to devise a budget strategy whereby employment services would be hammered to the tune of 24 percent and yet departmental services not only did not receive a reduction of any kind but enjoyed a modest increase. I'm sure that in her response to the question, there will come information that will reassure me and others that this isn't simply a case of being heroic with the budget scalpel when we're

looking at services far afield but being very timid with that same scalpel when we're looking at our friends and programs so close to home.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. There have been so many good comments going toward this minister that I'm going to refrain from the lauds and plaudits she's been receiving. I wouldn't want people on the opposition side to think there's anything biased in my remarks that are going to be forthcoming. I just want to give her some questions on her estimates here, which I believe is the procedure. I'd like to put her to work, because I know that's when she's happiest.

I think we need to just quickly reflect on the mission statement of this department, which is really giving Albertans the opportunity to prepare for and take part in productive employment. I believe that's a correct reflection of the small "c" and PC Alberta philosophy, in terms of we're not doing everything for everybody but we do believe in enabling people and giving them the equipment to do and have the opportunity to do the things they would like to do in their careers and in their lives.

I've got some questions for the minister on the estimates themselves that I'd like some answers for. If she doesn't have those tonight, Mr. Chairman, if she could get those answers to me sometime before 6 o'clock tomorrow morning, that would be fine.

I notice under vote 1 on page 71, Summary by Object and Type of Expenditure, that where it says "Purchase of Fixed Assets," it shows an increase of 63.2 percent. I wonder if the minister could advise whether that was some new program coming on and therefore capital costs were required: computer equipment, whatever that might be. But it seemed to be a fairly significant increase, and if we could get an answer on that.

Then on vote 2.3, Alberta Vocational Training. I recognize the challenge the minister faces in a time when we're looking at fiscal restraint and we are on a deficit reduction plan to zero, the only government in this country with such a plan and something that is certainly contrary to the Liberal/socialist belief. We are concerned about the deficit. So the minister, I realize, has some challenges in terms of keeping costs down. But when I see a decrease in Alberta Vocational Training of 7.9 percent, could she advise, Mr. Chairman, what that decrease represents? Are there fewer people actually applying for those programs? Has it shifted over? I'd appreciate knowing why that particular decrease.

Also, a suggestion under vote 2, Training and Career Services, and the vote would be 2.2, which is Apprenticeship and Trade Certification. There is some preliminary discussion going on, although it's not fully formalized yet, with the Department of Education in terms of looking at the potential for students who are not going to be, let's say, on an advanced graduation diploma or even a general diploma, more potential for them to develop their trade certification while they're still in school, before they even graduate. Right now they take different industrial training, but the level of actual trade certification towards a journeyman's certificate is not that significant, quite frankly, though the training they get in school is good. Is there any potential for Career Development to work together with the Department of Education to see meaningful apprenticeship taking place in the years before graduation so that those students graduating, let's say, at the age of 18 could be well on towards

attaining a journeyman certificate in the particular trade of their choice. [some applause] Glad you liked that. It's not often we get opposition applause, so we'll take it when we get it.

Also, I'd like to bring to the minister's attention, though I'm sure she's aware of it, that within her department a particular gentleman who has been a tremendous asset to the Alberta Tourism Education Council -- and just by sheer happenstance and coincidence he happens to be in the gallery tonight; that's Dr. Earl Mansfield -- has done a tremendous service in terms of being a link between the Alberta Tourism Education Council and your department. [some applause]

I have to wait till the thunderous applause dies down. But I would like to bring attention to vote 2.5. Within that vote -- this happened before the present minister arrived in this department -- certain dollars and resources were put towards industry based training towards a marketing course for people at the management level in the tourism industry. It was very well received, and it was a result of the council working with the department and industry and education, working together to show where there was a training need and then seeing that need addressed. It was a job well done by your department, Dr. Earl Mansfield, and others who took initiative there.

Also, vote 2.7. Some of the members might not be aware that this year for the first time, I believe, a brochure was sent to all high schools in the province highlighting for them the opportunities available for careers in the tourism and hospitality industry. That also was developed by the Department of Career Development and Employment, and we've had some good feedback on that. Using those two as examples, I'd just like to encourage the minister to give a good ear to Dr. Mansfield and other proposals and initiatives coming from the tourism council, and she can be assured that these have been vetted by industry, education, and government with a view to making sure there's no redundancy but really underlining the fact that these are areas of need. The tourism industry, as we know, is a growth industry that this government is targeting very aggressively. Certainly, your department has been a significant help, and we look forward to future good co-operation.

So with those comments and those questions, I congratulate the minister and wish her well in her department.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A number of interesting points have already been raised. I just want to direct some comments, though, to the vote 3 section on Immigration and Settlement Services. Certainly representing a downtown, inner-city constituency such as Edmonton-Centre, a great number of my constituents are new Canadians and new to the province of Alberta. Despite all the other important information we've had from the department and some information that's already been forthcoming on vote 3.3 and following, I'd like to pursue it a bit more with the minister and try to gain some clarification.

First, again to congratulate her on her appointment, as well as the fact that this vote, Immigration and Settlement Services, has gone up quite substantially. We have, in fact, been arguing for some time that it should be. More and more Albertans are coming from out of the province and out of the country, and the needs in this area of immigration settlement are very great indeed and are beginning to be met effectively, but there's a lot more to be done. I particularly would like to have some further

clarification on the whole issue of the needs of immigrant women. The minister has touched on the ESL programs for immigrant women, but I'm concerned when I hear from people such as the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers and the Catholic Social Services that there's still a great deal more that needs to be done in the area of mental health for immigrant women, as well as certain programs in hygiene and sexuality and so on in their adjustment to the North American culture and climate and finding their way not only in their family and in society but into the work force.

Certainly, too, the whole business in terms of their jobs -- a great number of immigrant women come to Canada with in fact some skills and training already. I take it that there's some difficulty with them finding kind of accreditation or certification for those skills when they're here in the province of Alberta. The incident of a particular constituent, a Vietnamese woman who now runs Minh Pharmacy, for instance, in my constituency took some time. In spite of the fact that she had some training in pharmacy in Vietnam, when she came to Alberta, she had a great deal of difficulty in being able to set up as a pharmacist here. So the whole business of certifying those kinds of skills and accreditation of them here in the province I think could be expedited to help them to see that those skills are in fact needed and appropriate and that they can get set to work in their jobs here.

I'm again wondering what the minister is doing with the minister responsible for the status of women in the province and certain initiatives coming out of the women's council, that I'm sure has in fact also looked into the area of immigrant women. They've made a number of recommendations. I'm wondering just how closely she's working with that hon. minister to make sure that they're working together in a comprehensive way for the benefit of immigrant women in the province.

As well, I'm getting increasing kinds of concerns from constituents about immigrant youth. Again, in the Vietnamese community a lot of Vietnamese youth are finding their way through the school system but then often tend to drop out, to get into the pool halls or get into certain cafes and clubs or even into gangs in the city and really have employment opportunities that are not the best. I'm wondering what initiatives this minister is taking with these dollars to develop more programs for immigrant youth or youth from families of newcomers to the province, where I think there is a great deal more that needs to be done.

Further, I'd like this minister to be able to provide some more information, if she can, or some documentation in terms of the unemployment rates in the province and in the cities among different ethnic groups. I had this argument with the previous minister two times ago, who took great exception to my figures, which indicate that about 30 percent of the Vietnamese population in Edmonton, for instance, is unemployed. What kind of data is the minister collecting, either herself or with her federal counterparts, to see the degree of unemployment among the various ethnic groups in the province and, having gotten that kind of data, to be able to really get a hold of it and go after employment strategies.

I'm wondering also, Mr. Chairman, the degree to which this vote and the moneys going to it are being spent in regionalization services. I mean, I don't want to cast aspersions upon the important immigrant settlement work that's being done in rural Alberta, but it seems to me that a lot of newcomers come into Edmonton and Calgary and that the programs can be delivered

fairly efficiently in those cities as well as Lethbridge and some of the other major cities. I'm wondering how much of this money is going to set up regional offices and regionalized services and whether in fact that's sort of building a bureaucracy that isn't needed. Yet there seem to be initiatives in terms of developing this bureaucracy, in developing this kind of regionalization effort, and I'm wondering if the minister has evaluated just how necessary it is or how worth while it is when in fact the money should be getting to the clients, the money should be getting to those in need, and not to hire more bureaucrats and more of a regionalization program.

As well, I'm wondering if the minister can provide us with some further information about the relationship that she has with the federal government. I'm never quite sure what's a federal Employment and Immigration program as opposed to a provincial one. It seems to me, though, as we've discovered with transfer payments generally, that the federal government is off-loading onto the provinces more and more responsibilities, and I think the amount of funding that's coming from the province is rising in this area. I'm wondering if the minister is satisfied that the province takes on 50, 55, 60, 70 percent of the funding for these programs or whether in fact the federal government should maintain its fair share and continue to fund these kinds of programs as well and just how that's shaking out.

As well, with the minister sitting behind her, I'm wondering what this minister is doing with the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism. It seems to me that there are a lot of initiatives that need to be coming from that minister in terms not just of the kind of song and dance of multiculturalism but identifying the needs of a multicultural Alberta, not just in their cultural pursuits but in their employment pursuits. So I'm wondering how much the minister is linked up with that minister to work again in a more comprehensive way. I'm concerned that the Multicultural Commission I believe is still without a chairman and some people in that area. A lot more needs to be done, and I'd like to see this minister work together with that minister to develop more comprehensive initiatives, as I've said.

As well, could the minister comment about the recommendations from -- again, I don't know the official name of this committee, but it was set up by the minister, two previous. We call it the Orman committee, the group that was seemingly political appointments by that minister two times ago, who set up a number of friends to look at issues of the workplace and how ethnic groups and newcomers to Alberta were fitting into the workplace: a great number of very thorny issues in this area in both Calgary and Edmonton. This committee, I think, was struck a year and a half ago. They were supposed to have made some recommendations, I think, six months ago, and I still haven't heard, in fact, what they've done or how far it's come and what all of that has meant in terms of really investigating some complaints in the workplace and what's been done to remedy that and to make it the kind of workplace that newcomers and immigrants to Alberta need to have in terms of being proud of their workplace and being proud to work along side of us. As we know, Alberta is for all of us, and we want to continue to make that a strong theme of the vote in this department.

I'm glad to see the increased funding, but I'd like to have some more information about these particular parts of the program and again commend the minister for the increase in funding support as well as her appointment and work in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be quick. First of all, I'd just like to take a moment to congratulate and commend the hon. minister, Connie Osterman, and the former minister, Ken Kowalski, for a fine job. As you can see, they've done a swell job in streamlining their budgets. Our economy is improved in Alberta except in some areas, and we need to work on that. Also, I'd like to commend the deputy minister and the assistant deputy ministers. I know they were here earlier today.

I believe another area we tend to forget sometimes is the Alberta apprenticeship program, which has been around for a long time, and regardless of what party, I believe that's something we should be proud of. From what I understand, recently Alberta has trained 25 percent of all the apprentices in Canada. That's something to be proud of as an Albertan, and we don't want to forget that. The counseling programs provided by that department are some of the best in the country, except that we need more of them in the north. That is the positive side.

I do have some concerns in relation to the budget and the programming. I believe that Career Development and Employment has been around for a long time with the programs. One area that I can see we should start looking at is co-ordinated delivery between Career Development and Employment and social services. I know as a fact, especially in the northern areas of the province, that a lot of the clientele your department is dealing with, social services is also dealing with but in separate offices and with different administrations and different administrators. I think it's time that we further co-ordinate our expenditures and streamline programs and be more effective for people, especially people on social assistance. I think that's something that should be considered by this government.

The other area: when we're talking about STEP and PEP, I believe one thing that could be looked at in the future is the possibility of block funding municipalities to administer some of these programs. I think that would save us a lot of money. I know municipalities would be very, very happy. In fact, a lot of municipalities have approached me to start looking at that, because what's happening now is that they are individually applying for the STEP or PEP programs through your department. They get the funding; they hire the people based on their unemployment rate and possible availability of STEP students in the area and projects. Maybe in the future we should look at block funding municipalities to administer these programs. That could further streamline the operation of that particular department, because you'd probably need less staff if you did that.

The other area: I know there's a mention of cuts of programs. There are some concerns on program cuts. I know that the ABCD program is a very effective program in northern Alberta. I think that when programs are cut in the future, one of the things that should be considered is that the high unemployment areas should be handled a bit differently. We do have in Alberta a line that's set called the Canada/Alberta northern agreement boundary, which is a specific boundary that's been identified as an area that's economically and socially depressed. That line is still there, and it probably will be there for quite a long time unless the economy moves differently in the north. So when we cut programs in the future in any department, that line should be taken into consideration. We are economically and socially depressed yet in the north. And I say that department, along with other departments.

The other concern I have is that when you go in the north, we have a large area. The Canada/Alberta northern development boundary covers about a third of the province. A lot of the government departments that work in those areas, in particular your department, have an office in Peace River that serves people in my constituency north of Lac La Biche. Now, the distance is three times as far as Edmonton. They'd be better served out of Edmonton; better yet if there were a northeast regional office out of that region with better service for the clientele in that region. Let's face it; the Lac La Biche area has the highest rate of welfare per capita in the province, and the need for programs of that nature is definitely there.

The other area, of course, is career counseling offices. They're nonexistent in either Athabasca or the Lac La Biche areas. Again, there's the highest unemployment rate there, the highest rate of welfare. Programs like yours could really be beneficial in that area.

With that, I'll close. Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would offer my congratulations to the minister. She's been in many, many portfolios in this government and has always done a super good job.

AN HON. MEMBER: A matter of opinion.

MR. THURBER: A matter of fact.

Mr. Chairman, the questions and the concerns that I would like to bring to the minister's attention would be in line with the comments the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche brought up. As we diversify into these forestry projects throughout the province and the spin-offs from them, is your department taking advantage of this and becoming job specific in the training and in the apprenticeship program so that we can have areas in there where these people who are possibly on social assistance at the time or otherwise unemployable may be able to become good citizens of the country and maintain their dignity by having jobs in these specific areas? I guess that's a real concern that we're geared up ahead of time so that they can take advantage of these specific jobs that come out through this diversification.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Madam Minister, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre would like to ask one more question, and then perhaps you could wind up.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you for your indulgence. I did forget just one quick thing, which I'm surprised that I forgot because it's so dear to my heart. It has to do with health care. I'm just wondering, again in the area of settlement services, what effort this minister is making to present to the Minister of Health the fact that many newcomers, refugee claimants, in Alberta have difficulty in getting a job and keeping a job if their health is not well cared for and, in fact, should be able to apply for and get coverage under the Alberta health care insurance plan. Now, this has been an ongoing issue, as we know, for several years, and I would just like an update in terms of this minister's views and what representation she's made to the Minister of Health with respect to this issue.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, let me briefly address some of the last comments. To the Member for Edmonton-Centre, I think that I need to prepare some more comprehensive comments on the immigration area for the hon. member in terms of the agencies that are working with us and our plans in that area, and I undertake to do that.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. members for Athabasca-Lac La Biche and Taber-Warner made some excellent comments about the STEP program. Interestingly enough, we have done some block funding this year. We felt that the municipalities were better off with the dollars, and I believe it's fair to say, for the hon. Member for Taber-Warner, that the community he cited maybe had the same dollars, but they wouldn't have gone as far this year. We added to the budget in order to incorporate the increases in the minimum wage and so on so that we could try to keep the program about as it was or slightly larger than last year. Indeed, we believe that municipalities are in a better position to decide how they're going to allocate those positions.

We've got about four areas of allocation, Mr. Chairman, and I've received a lot of comments from around the province this year because we've had an incredible increase in requests for STEP students. It is the basis of a fair allocation of those students that we must address. Given the history that we can now work with this year, I certainly undertake to review how our allocation has gone and how well it has addressed the fairness aspect. Certainly I think we were reasonably generous in continuing the program as it was, but when you get those kinds of increases in terms of interest, it's very difficult to make sure you've served all the province fairly. Certainly there are new people looking to get assistance from the program.

The hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche as well raised an important item. When we look at our programs, we can maybe say that for 80 percent of the province the conditions are thus and so, but we ought to be looking at the regions to address a regional impact. Notwithstanding the fact that we see our native community very well represented in our vocational centres and so on, there's more to be done. I think we have to look at all our programming and isolate it in relationship to some specific communities where unemployment is very high.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek appropriately raised the overall budget in terms of how his constituents look at the budget. My constituents bring me precisely the same comments. So our view this year was to do a better job of targeting areas to serve and people to be served and to utilize the funds accordingly. I think I answered the question on administration. We were looking at basically the kinds of negotiated wage increases that we had to deal with, and that affected our administration. The increase in the program policy development area is critical. I hope all hon. members would agree that as we walk through the dramatic changes in our society and global events that affect our industries and our workers' ability to compete, we must have good policy development. We must be on top of all of those events in determining what kind of training our workers are going to need. So I certainly don't apologize for any of the work that's being done in that area. I think it's absolutely critical.

The hon. Member for Red Deer-North is always interesting to hear. He raised some questions about fixed assets, which is our electronic data processing area. The Alberta vocational training program again reflects the kind of participation that we

had last year. As I said before, we believe that is indicative of the kind of increase in employment opportunities.

The area of how we work with the transition from our high school educational area to the work force or into some other type of upgrading. Apparently the Department of Education is carrying on an extensive review of what they call their practical arts curriculum, and we're participating in that review. I imagine there might be some hon. members in the House tonight that are aware of it. The age of our apprentices that are now participating, interestingly enough, is apparently averaging something like 26. There are a lot of young people that could possibly make that transition earlier into apprenticeship if we had the right kind of a transition system in place.

I wanted to note my predecessors; two of them are here tonight in the House. I note that they are not without receiving comments from the opposition as well, so I'm obviously going to feel at home in terms of comments that are barbed, I suppose, towards ministers on occasion when we don't seem to acknowledge the kinds of tilings the opposition would like us to do. I can assure hon. members that regardless of our differences in philosophy, I treat all their comments very seriously and look for them to continue.

I would end by saying that I particularly appreciated the bigger picture comments made by the hon. Member for Smoky River. I think that all people who have traveled and seen the kind of activity, especially where countries are particularly successful, have to be mindful of what it is that they do. When we can awaken our young people to the possibilities of being in business and indeed creating jobs, I think that it's really important, because jobs don't materialize out of thin air. It is people with skills, knowledge, information, taking risks that indeed build the businesses in this province, particularly small business because that's where the great increase in employment opportunities is. Those are the people that are going to build a future for many others who don't see themselves taking that leadership role but nonetheless realize that employment is a very important aspect of their lives.

Mr. Chairman, I've certainly enjoyed all of the comments this evening. At this point in time, I think that I have made all that I can.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise, report progress, and beg leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the report, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no. Carried.

MR. GOGO: By way of notice, Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the government will call second readings of Bills listed on the Order Paper, commencing with Bill 2.

[At 10:38 p.m. the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]

